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Bibliography IV

Direct and Indirect Discourse*

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A. Introductory remarks

The relationship between direct and indirect discourse has been of interest to traditional grammarians, scholars of style, and philosophers of language. Jespersen 1924:ch. 21 treats indirect discourse as derived in some way from direct discourse: 'Either one gives, or purports to give, the exact words of the speaker (or writer)...Or else one adapts the words according to the circumstances in which they are now quoted' (290). In later pages (292-9) he lists principles for shifting direct speech to indirect.

Jespersen also distinguishes two kinds of indirect discourse, which he calls dependent and represented speech--the former appearing as a complement to a verb of report (say, think, hope, wonder, ask, want to know, etc.), the latter standing free, as in

(1) Herbert was terrified. What would happen to him?

Compare the direct

(2) Herbert was terrified. He thought, 'What will happen to me?'

And the dependent indirect

(3) Herbert was terrified. He wondered what would happen to him.

The type of reported speech illustrated in (1) has been the subject of considerable study as a point of style, following Bally's 1912 discussion of style indirect libre in French; see the items cited by Jespersen 1924:291 and Gragg 1972:81.

Philosophers' interest in quotations and reports arises from the issue of opacity (Quine 1960: secs. 30-32). For indirect discourse, as in

(4) Margaret said my paternal grandfather was Swiss.

the content of certain noun phrases (here my paternal grandfather) can be understood either as the contribution of the speaker of the

sentence (the de re, or transparent, understanding) or as the contribution of the subject of the sentence (the de dicto, or opaque, understanding). The philosophical problem is that only on the transparent understanding is truth preserved for alternative descriptions of the same object. Thus, despite the fact that my paternal grandfather was Melchior Zwicky,

(5) Margaret said Melchior Zwicky was Swiss.

is equivalent to (4) only when my paternal grandfather is understood transparently. Direct quotations, of course, are entirely opaque;

(6) Margaret said, 'Arnold's paternal grandfather is Swiss'.
(7) Margaret said, 'Melchior Zwicky is Swiss'.

are not logically equivalent. Partee 1973:418 lists some philosophical discussions of these matters.

B. The transformational literature

Examples of indirect discourse are analyzed as cases of that-complementation in a large number of studies, and there is some treatment of sequence of tenses (as in Ross 1967:sec. 5.1.3.2.6), but there seems to be no systematic discussion of direct and indirect discourse in transformational terms before Sadock 1969:315-32, a work primarily devoted to arguing for the so-called 'performative analysis' also advanced by Ross 1970. Sadock distinguishes between significant direct quotations, in which both the content and the form of a discourse are reported, and nonsignificant direct quotations, which report only the phonological form. For many speakers, the verb go occurs only with nonsignificant direct quotations:

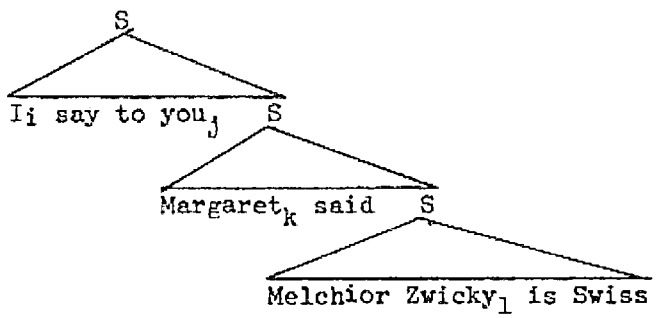
(8) Mark went, 'Yodelo-hi-ho'.[1]

Sadock claims that direct quotations with say are ambiguous as to their significance, so that

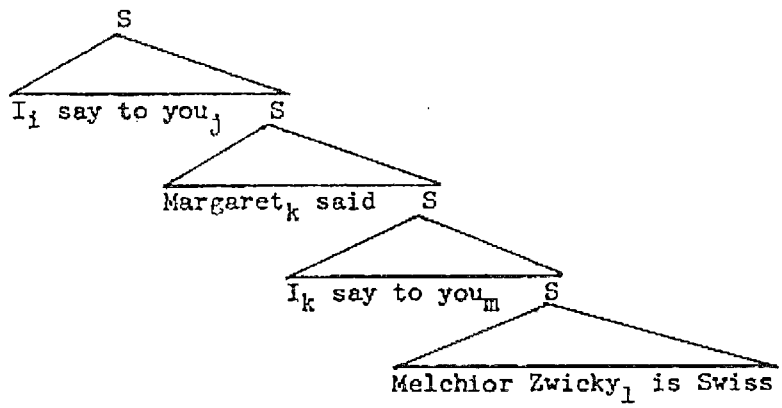
(9) Mark said, 'What a piece of work is man!'

may report only the approximate phonological form of Mark's utterance, or this form in combination with its significance.[2] He then associates higher 'performative' structures (hypersentences) with main clauses and with embedded significant quotations; at some point in their derivation, then, (5) and (7) would be represented as

(10)



(11)



respectively. At this level of representation, neither the structure for the nonsignificant reading of (9) nor the structure associated with verbs like <u>believe</u> that do not take direct quotation objects--

(12) Susan believes that Quaalude is dangerous.
(13) *Susan believes, 'Quaalude is dangerous.'

will have embedded hypersentences. Sadock points out in a footnote (363-4) that structure (10) might itself be derived from a structure with an embedded hypersentence, but that there are a number of arguments against deriving indirect discourse from direct discourse in this fashion.

The difficulties of mapping direct discourse into indirect[3] are exposed further in two papers originally presented at the 1969 winter meeting of the LSA, Gallagher 1970 and Lee 1970. Lee proposes, however, that the transformational position be saved by claiming that sentences in indirect discourse are ambiguous, with one reading derived from deep structure indirect discourse and the other from deep structure direct discourse. The first treatment is advocated for examples like

(14) John said that someone$_i$ would leave, but he$_i$ didn't.

where the direct discourse source is unavailable--

(15) *John said, 'Someone$_i$ will leave', but he$_i$ didn't.

while the second treatment applies in cases like

(16) Harry said that Mary was pregnant, but John said, 'No she isn't'.

where pronominalization and deletion in 'No she isn't' correspond to the same operations in

(17) Harry said, 'Mary is pregnant', but John said, 'No she isn't'.

Zwicky 1971 considers the relationship between utterances and reports of them, without proposing that indirect discourse is derived from direct discourse. This brief article claims that different verbs differ in which aspects of an utterance they report and emphasizes (with McCawley 1970) that identifications and descriptions in reports may be supplied by the reporter.

Gragg 1972 treats 'semi-indirect' discourse--not only style indirect libre, but also the English parenthetical constructions--

(18) I'm ok, tell them.

and inverted indirect questions--

(19) John asked, could he come too.

and constructions with the Amharic verb ālə 'he said', which takes direct discourse complements.

Parenthetical constructions bring to mind the mood markers that have been described in many languages--for instance, in Hidatsa (Matthews 1965:99-101),

> The Emphatic mood indicates that the speaker knows the sentence to be true...The Period mood indicates that the speaker believes the sentence to be true...The Quotative mood indicates that the speaker regards what he has said to be something that everyone knows... The Report mood indicates that the speaker was told the information given in the sentence by someone else, but has no other evidence of its truth value. However-it is not necessarily a verbatim repetition...The Indefinite and the Question moods are alike in that they both indicate that the speaker does not know whether or not the sentence is true. The Indefinite also means that the speaker thinks the listener does not know; whereas the Question means that the speaker thinks the listener does know.

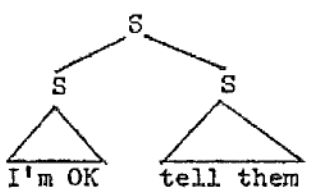
Note the contrast between all standard treatments of English (unembedded) direct discourse, which is morphologically unmarked, and this analysis of Hidatsa, where sentence final markers indicate the various moods. Darden 1973 similarly contrasts reported speech in Lithuanian, which can be expressed by apparently independent clauses with participles as their main verbs, and the situation in Bulgarian, which has distinct perfective past forms for reported and nonreported speech. The Lithuanian examples are fairly obviously derived from embedded clauses, whereas there is some evidence against the corresponding analysis for Bulgarian (though this evidence is not overwhelming).

English parentheticals have been treated by several investigators--by Ross ms. 1970, who derives sentences like (18) from sentences with embedded clauses, e.g.

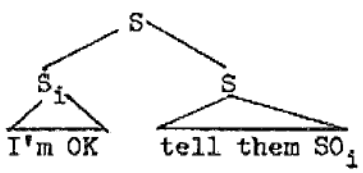
(20) Tell them (that) I'm ok.

by a rule called Sentence Raising, Sentence Lifting, or Slifting; by Emonds 1973, who follows an unpublished paper of Rardin's in advocating a concatenated source like

(21) a.



or b.



and by Nobel 1971, who suggests a concatenated ('adverbial') source for some parentheticals (namely, those subject to Neg-Raising--nonagentives, corresponding to Kimball's 1972a 'expressive' uses of verbs) and a higher sentence source for others (those not subject to Neg Raising--agentives, corresponding to Kimball's 'reportive' uses of verbs). Ross and Emonds both go on to discuss the insertion of parentheticals into the clauses with which they are associated:

(22) Margaret was accustomed to Caribbean tours, I said.
(23) Margaret, I said, was accustomed to Caribbean tours.
(24) Margaret was, I said, accustomed to Caribbean tours.
(25) Margaret was accustomed, I said, to Caribbean tours.

Emonds reminds us, moreover, that direct quotations are as easily interrupted by parentheticals as indirect quotations:

(26) 'Margaret', I said, 'is accustomed to Caribbean tours'.
(27) 'Margaret is', I said, 'accustomed to Caribbean tours'.
(28) 'Margaret is accustomed', I said, 'to Caribbean tours'.

That direct quotations can be interrupted in this way is another indication--besides the ability, pointed out by many authors, of various anaphoric elements to refer inside direct quotations--that they are not totally isolated from their linguistic context.

A novel distinction between direct and indirect discourse in embedded clauses is made by Partee 1973a,b who (expanding on a suggestion of Davidson's) concludes that a 'quoted sentence is not syntactically or semantically a part of the sentence that contains it' (Partee 1973 :418); she explains anaphoric reference into direct quotations on the basis of anaphora in discourse, thus following Dressler's 1970 exhortation to transformational grammarians to consider grammar beyond the sentence. Partee's 1973a position that verbs introducing indirect speech have propositions rather than sentences as objects is consistent with the analyses of Sadock and Lee.

Banfield 1973 lists arguments against deriving indirect discourse from direct discourse and against deriving direct discourse from indirect discourse (as in one version of the 'performative analysis') In the latter case, she cites material that can appear only in direct discourse: (i) sentences to which root transformations have applied, (ii) various expressive or emotive elements, (iii) incomplete sentences, (iv) vocative NPs, and (v) speech in other dialects or languages. Her main goal, however, is to ground an account of direct speech, indirect speech, and style indirect libre on the distinction between reportive style and nonreportive or expressive style, following Kuroda 1973.[4] Then,

> Indirect speech occurs when a verb of communication takes a sentence (S) complement as a direct object. As in all other embedded clauses, the elements which can occur only in the expansions of E [the category of expressive elements, or expressions]..., and not in that of S, are excluded. The speech act and its content are only reported, not reproduced. (17)

Banfield follows Partee in taking direct quotation to be equivalent to two independent sentences (actually, two expressions). Finally, 'the free indirect style attempts to fill a hiatus in the grammar by allowing expressions (E) to be introduced by verbs normally marked to take sentences as complements' (29). In all cases, the interpretation of deictic elements is accounted for by general principles that assign referents to them.

In addition to this literature concerning the relationship between direct and indirect discourse, there is a substantial literature on various specific types of embedded clauses (embedded questions and exclamations, in particular). I will not attempt to survey this material here, although it obviously has some bearing on the general problem. Similarly, I do not consider discussions of performative vs. reportive uses of particular verbs, as in

(29) I promise you I'll wash the dishes.
(30) I often promise you I'll wash the dishes, but I rarely do it.

although these matters, too, relate to the general problem.

Footnotes

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1. Partee 1973b:412 makes the same observation.

2. Quang 1971:fn. 10 points out that the object of say doesn't have to be a sentence, or even be in English, or even be a speech sound. Partee 1973b:412 reports that in her speech the object of say must be a sentence.

3. Gallagher distinguishes between the proposal that (5) is transformationally related to something like (7) and the proposal that transformations express in some way the fact that (5) is one speaker's report of Margaret's saying something like Melchior Zwicky is Swiss. Following most of my sources, I disregard this distinction in my survey.

4. Interestingly, Kuroda cites Russell for the distinction, while Kimball (who uses a very similar distinction) cites Wittgenstein.

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